

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 14593 111429Z

41
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SUBJ: USSR VIEW ON EAST AND SOUTH EAST ASIA: KAPITSA-PLIMSOLL(II)

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1. FOLLOWING IS A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT FROM AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR PLIMSOLL'S DISPATCH OF OCTOBER 3, SUMMARIZED IN REFTEL. THIS EXCERPT INCLUDES HIS OPENING SENTENCES AND THE FIRST SECTION, CALLED "SOUTH EAST ASIAN SECURITY."

2. BEGIN QUOTE: I CALLED TODAY ON KAPITSA (CHIEF OF FIRST FAR EASTERN DIVISION OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS). I BEGAN BY DISCUSSING THE SPEECH IN THE GENERAL DEBATE IN THE UNITED NATIONS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 14593 111429Z

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BY CH-IAO KUAN-HUA.

SOUTH EAST ASIAN SECURITY - KAPITSA SAID THAT CHIAOS' APPROVING REMARKS ABOUT ZONE OF NEUTRALITY ETC. IN SOUTH EAST ASIA WAS IN PART A TACTIC TO HAVE AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR AN ASIAN SECURITY PACT AND ONE WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE THE USSR. KAPITSA SAID THAT DESPITE STATEMENTS FROM TIME TO TIME IN THE OTHER DIRECTION, THE USSR BASICALLY WAS NOT OPPOSED TO ASEAN. FAILURE OF THE USSR TO HAVE A DEFINITE POSITION ON THAT SPRANG FROM INERTIA RATHER THAN OPPOSITION. ASEAN OR LIKELY DEVELOPMENTS FROM IT DID NOT SEEM TO THE USSR TO TAKE THE FORM OF A MILITARY PACT AND MILITARY ORGANIZATION THAT WOULD GIVE PROBLEMS FOR THE USSR.

I ASKED WHETHER THE INDO-CHINA STATES WERE LIKELY TO COME INTO ANY SOUTH EAST ASIAN ORGANIZATION SUCH AS ASEAN OR AN EXPANSION OF IT. KAPITSA SAID THE USSR KNEW DEFINITELY THAT HANOI WAS NOT INTERESTED IN THAT. APART FROM ANYTHING ELSE IT DID NOT WANT TO COME INTO ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAD HISTORICALLY EVOLVED IN CIRCUMSTANCES UNACCEPTABLE TO THEM AND WITHOUT THEIR PARTICIPATION. HOWEVER, HANOI HAD TOLD THE SOVIET UNION THAT THEY FAVORED A WIDE GROUPING OF COUNTRIES OF SOUTH EAST ASIA TAKING IN THE PHILIPPINES, INDO-CHINA, THAILAND, BURMA, MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA AND POSSIBLY ALSO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. HANOI WOULD WANT A REGION IN WHICH THERE WOULD BE NO OUTSIDE INTERFERENCES AND THIS WOULD MEAN EXCLUDING AMERICAN BASES AND ALSO CHINESE INTERFERENCE. IF THE QUESTION AROSE OF GUARANTEES FROM OUTSIDE POWERS THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BE PREPARED TO GIVE SUCH GUARANTEES PROVIDED IT WAS SATISFIED ON THE NATURE OF WHAT WAS BEING GUARANTEED.

I SAID THAT A MATTER THAT DIRECTLY AFFECTED AUSTRALIA WAS THE ATTITUDE OF THE INDO-CHINA STATES TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE. WHAT WAS THEIR ATTITUDE TO BECOMING OR CONTINUING TO BE IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, THE COLOMBO PLAN AND THE MEKONG VALLEY PROJECTS? KAPITSA REPLIED THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE INDO-CHINESE STATES HAD SO MANY IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS THAT THEY HAD NOT HAD TIME TO CONSIDER THAT. I REPLIED THAT IT WAS OF SOME IMMEDIATE IMPORTANCE TO AID-GIVING AND POTENTIAL AID-GIVING COUNTRIES. KAPITSA SAID THAT ONE OF THE REASONS WHY THE UNITING OF SOUTH VIET-NAM WITH NORTH VIET-NAM WAS NOT GOING MORE QUICKLY WAS A BELIEF THAT SOUTH VIET-NAM WITH ITS STILL SEMI-BOURGEOIS ECONOMY AND INSTITUTIONS COULD ABSORB INTER-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 14593 111429Z

NATIONAL AID WHICH IT WOULD BE INSTITUTIONALLY DIFFICULT FOR NORTH VIET-NAM TO ABSORB. THERE WOULD BE DIFFICULTIES ALSO ABOUT MANY FORMS OF AID FOR LAOS AND CAMBODIA THOUGH LASOS WAS FEELING THE PINCH OVER THE ENDING OF AMERICAN AID. NORTH VIET-NAM STILL HOPED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD FULFILL ITS PROMISE AT THE PARIS SETTLEMENTS THAT IT WOULD PROVIDE IT WITH ECONOMIC AID.

I SAID THAT THE INDO-CHINA STATES WERE NOT MAKING IT ANY EASIER

FOR THE UNITED STATES TO PROVIDE THEM WITH ASSISTANCE. NORTH VIET-NAM WAS WITHHOLDING INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE PRISONERS-OF-WAR AND AMERICANS MISSING IN ACTION, AND IN LAOS THERE HAD BEEN PHYSICAL ATTACKS ON AMERICAN BUILDINGS. I SAID THAT I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT FOR HANOI TO BE GENUINELY FORTHCOMING ON THAT MATTER. KAPITSA REPLIED THAT HE COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT NORTH VIET-NAM WAS STILL HOLDING ANY AMERICAN PRISONERS-OF-WAR. THEY HAD NO INTEREST TO SERVE BY DOING SO. BUT HE SAID I HAD TO REMEMBER THE GREAT EMOTIONS THAT HAD BEEN ROUSED BY THE VIETNAMESE FIGHTING AND THAT IT WAS NOT EASY TO SET THOSE EMOTIONS ASIDE. I REPLIED THAT THERE WERE STRONG EMOTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES ALSO AND THAT SURELY IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE AUTHORITIES IN HANOI TO HANDLE THINGS SO THAT THE AMERICANS COULD BE SATISFIED ON THAT POINT. IF THAT HAPPENED IT COULD BE A BIG OPENING UP OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNITED STATES RELATIONS IN REGARD TO INDO-CHINA. KAPITSA MUSED ABOUT THIS IN SILENCE FOR HALF A MINUTE OR SO AND THEN REMARKED IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE USSR TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THIS TO LE DUAN WHEN HE HAD TALKS IN MOSCOW LATER THIS MONTH. VIET-NAM HAD BEEN AN OBSTRUCTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE USSR AND THE USA IN PAST YEARS. THE USSR DID NOT WANT IT TO BECOME AN IMPEDIMENT AGAIN IN FUTURE.

I ASKED ABOUT THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA. KAPITSA SAID IT COULD BECOME EITHER A SECOND ALBAINA OR A SECOND VIET-NAM (WITHOUT OF COURSE THE RESOURCES OR STRENGTH OF THE LATTER). THE PRO-CHINESE CAMBODIANS CONTROLLED PHONM PENH AND PART OF THE COUNTRY. NONE OF THE PUBLIC NAMES WAS OF THE FIRST RANK. THE PRINCIPAL FIGURES OF THE POLITBURO WERE STILL KEEPING IN THE BACKGROUND. I ASKED ABOUT IENG SARY. KAPITSA SAID THAT HE WAS A PERSON OF THE SECOND RANK AND NOT IN THE POLITBURO. HE WAS NOT PRO-CHINESE AND HE WAS PROBABLY NOT PRO-VIETNAMESE EITHER.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 MOSCOW 14593 111429Z

THE CHINESE HAD HAD TO TALK VERY HARD TO THE CAMBODIANS TO PERSUADE THEM TO TAKE SIHANOUK BACK. THE CAMBODIANS DID NOT WANT HIM. THE IDEA OF A KING OR FORMER KING AS HEAD OF STATE CUT ACROSS THEIR CONCEPTION. THE CHINESE HAD POINTED OUT THAT HE NEED NOT BE KEPT VERY LONG AND COULD THEN BE PENSIONED OFF OR ALLOWED TO LEAVE (KAPITSA DREW AN ANALOGY WITH THE FORMER KING OF ROUMANIA). END QUOTE.

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